

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 145361  
ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 HA-05 SS-15 SIG-03 AID-05  
IO-13 AGRE-00 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 ICA-11  
TRSY-02 /113 R

DRAFTED BY EA/TIMBS:DLFIELD:EVC  
APPROVED BY EA/TIMBS:REFRITTS  
NEA/PAB:DARCHARD (SUBS)  
HA/ORM:GMETSON (SUBS)  
EA/P:JCANNON  
P:JFORBES (SUBS)

-----117647 082058Z /64

R 081629Z JUN 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMCONSUL MADRAS  
AMCONSUL BOMBAY  
AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMCONSUL LAHORE  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 145361

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, BM, BG

SUBJECT:MUSLIMS FROM BURMA IN BANGLADESH

1. REVISED CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE FOLLOWS BELOW.

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2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. QUOTE:

Q: ARE REPORTS TRUE THAT MORE THAN 150,000 MUSLIMS HAVE  
FLED BURMA AND ENTERED BANGLADESH?

A: ACCORDING TO THE UNHCR ABOUT 150,000 MUSLIMS HAVE

ENTERED SOUTHERN BANGLADESH FROM BURMA'S ARAKAN STATE.

Q: WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

A: THEY ARE SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIMS, MANY OF WHOM ORIGINATED IN WHAT IS NOW BANGLADESH. THE BANGLADESHIS CLAIM THAT MOST HAVE LIVED IN BURMA FOR GENERATIONS, WHILE THE BURMESE SAY THEY ARE RECENT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

Q: ARE THEY BEING FORCED OUT OF BURMA?

A: THE GOVERNMENT OF BURMA SAYS IT IS CONDUCTING A POPULATION CENSUS IN THE AREA AND HAS ARRESTED 683 ILLEGAL

IMMIGRANTS. WORD OF THIS CENSUS THEN REPORTEDLY SPREAD RAPIDLY AND MANY MUSLIMS FLED SIMPLY TO ESCAPE POSSIBLE ARREST.

THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT AND PRESS ALLEGE MISTREATMENT OF THESE PEOPLE AND CONSIDER THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED OUT OF THEIR VILLAGES IN THE NORTHERN ARAKAN.

Q: IS THE U.S. DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?

A: THE UNITED STATES IS FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS PROVIDING THROUGH UNHCR 2,638,000 DOLS IN RELIEF FOOD (UNDER PL-480  
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II) AND A CASH GRANT OF 500,000 DOLS. WE HAVE ALSO ENCOURAGED THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM BETWEEN THEMSELVES. AN OFFICIAL DELEGATION FROM BANGLADESH IS VISITING RANGOON FROM JUNE 6 TO 10 TO DISCUSS THE BORDER PROBLEM. UNQUOTE.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. FYI: DURING A MAY 30 FAREWELL CALL BY BURMESE AMBASSADOR U TIN LAT ON UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND IN A SHORT DISCUSSION WITH EA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY PRIOR TO THE MEETING, THE PROBLEM OF MUSLIMS FLEEING BURMA WAS RAISED. AFTER CHARACTERIZING THE PROBLEM AS ONE PRIMARILY OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, TIN LAT STATED TWICE THAT THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT HAS INVITED THE MUSLIMS TO RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGES. IN RESPONSE TO EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS KEEP THEIR LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN ON THIS MATTER, TIN LAT REPLIED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS AND SEVERAL OFFICIAL VISITS HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO ASSERTED THAT BURMA HAS ALWAYS HAD GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH. IN A SUBSEQUENT INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH

THE BURMESE EMBASSY, THE GUB INVITATION TO THE MUSLIMS  
TO RETURN WAS RAISED. IN RESPONSE AN EMBASSY OFFICIAL  
INDICATED THAT THE OFFER EXTENDED TO THOSE WHO HAD BEEN  
IN BURMA LEGALLY, I.E. THOSE WHO HAD BEEN ISSUED FOREIGN  
RESIDENCY CERTIFICATES OR WHO WERE REGISTERED CITIZENS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MOSLEMS, REFUGEES, INSTRUCTIONS, THE PRESS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 08 jun 1978  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**TAGS:** EAID, SOPN, BM, BG  
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